

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights



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GENDER IDENTITY PROTECTIONS ADDED TO STATE'S ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW

Bill's Passage by the Maryland General Assembly Comes after Years of Advocacy by MCCR & Other Organizations in the Civil Rights Community

Baltimore, MD – On March 28, 2014, the Maryland General Assembly passed Senate Bill 212 – *The Fairness for All Marylanders Act of 2014*, which adds “gender identity” as a protected class to Maryland’s laws against discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) celebrates the passage of this legislation. As the primary civil rights enforcement agency in the State of Maryland, MCCR will continue to work to ensure civil rights protections to all Marylanders. The bill now awaits the Governor’s signature.

“Simply speaking, this is the right thing to do,” states Cleveland L. Horton II, MCCR Acting Executive Director. “While work remains to be done to advance and promote civil rights in Maryland, codifying gender identity protections affords equality and opportunity to more than 30,000 Marylanders who were previously not protected under our law.”

Glendora C. Hughes, MCCR General Counsel, notes, “This has been a long time coming. A bill to include ‘gender identity’ as a protected class under our statute was first introduced in 1996; reintroduced in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014. This was a struggle, not an overnight achievement. MCCR has been there every step of the way to see this bill become law.”

Senate Bill 212 is scheduled take effect on October 1, 2014. MCCR is currently working with strategic partners and other advocacy groups to identify methods and programs to educate communities on this new legislation and its impact on individuals, communities and businesses.

MCCR represents the interest of the State to ensure equal opportunity for all through enforcement of Title 20 of the State Government Article and Title 19 of the State Finance & Procurement Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. MCCR investigates complaints of discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and state contracts filed by members of protected classes under federal and state law. For additional information, please contact Spencer Dove at 410-767-8576 or by email at spencer.dove@maryland.gov.

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